

PISTIS CHRISTOU IN GALATIANS

THE CONNECTION TO HABAKKUK 2:4

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Summary

The coherence of Paul's argument in Galatians 2:15–3:14 depends upon strong links among the πίστις phrases. Therefore the reader who understands a single use of πίστις in the passage can correctly infer basic aspects of the others. Therefore ἐκ πίστεως in Habakkuk 2:4, because it is cited in Galatians 3:11, informs the discussion about πίστις Χριστοῦ in Galatians 2:16, 20; and an Old Testament prophet speaks in a present-day controversy. Habakkuk, by using ἐκ πίστεως to refer to the faith of Gentiles, testifies that πίστις Χριστοῦ in Galatians refers to human faith as well.

1. Introduction

Few scholars look to Habakkuk 2:4 to determine whether πίστις Χριστοῦ in Paul is an objective genitive meaning 'faith in Christ' or a subjective genitive meaning 'Christ's faith/fulness'. Even the distance between the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrases in Galatians 2:16, 20 and ἐκ πίστεως ('from faith/fulness') in the Habakkuk quote in Galatians 3:11, speaks against its relevance in the *pistis Christou* debate. Scholars who do connect the πίστις phrases in Galatians 2 with ἐκ πίστεως in 3:11 have left key questions unanswered. It is the purpose of this article to establish the connections among the πίστις phrases in Galatians 2:15–3:14, including ἐκ πίστεως in 3:11, and then to argue that πίστις Χριστοῦ is an objective genitive on the grounds that Paul cites Habakkuk 2:4 to point to human faith. Both the Hebrew and the Greek play a role in the literature on Habakkuk 2:4b and are therefore cited below along with Galatians 3:11b.

Habakkuk 2:4b (MT): וְצַדִּיק בְּאַמּוֹנָתוֹ יִחִי

Habakkuk 2:4b (LXX): ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεώς μου ζήσεται

Habakkuk 2:4b (NRSV): but the righteous live by their faith

Galatians 3:11b: ὁ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται

Galatians 3:11b (NRSV): The one who is righteous will live by faith.

2. Recent Work on Πίστις Phrases in Paul

Richard Hays, who argues for πίστις Χριστοῦ as a subjective genitive, has long recognised connections among Paul's uses of πίστις in Galatians.¹ For example, he says that Paul's quotation of Habakkuk 2:4 in Galatians 3:11 alludes to Messiah's faith, that Abraham in Galatians 3:6-9 is not 'an exemplar of faith in Christ but ... a typological foreshadowing of Christ himself' who 'enacted the obedience of faith on their [his people's] behalf', and that ἀκοή πίστεως in Galatians 3:2, 5 means 'the faith message'.² In 1991 James Dunn, who reads πίστις Χριστοῦ as an objective genitive, commented: 'Hays' thesis hoovers up every relevant reference to "faith" in Galatians in order to defend the subjective genitive reading of 2:16, 20 and 3:22. This is nothing short of astonishing'.³

Most scholars who accept πίστις Χριστοῦ as a subjective genitive also find Hays to carry his thesis too far. In particular, they reject the idea that Abraham in Galatians 3:6-9 is a parallel to Christ rather than to Christians and that πίστις in οἱ ἐκ πίστεως (literally 'the ones from faith/fulness') in Galatians 3:7, 9, therefore, refers to Christ's faith/fulness.⁴ In fact, Hays himself has come to find his own position too

¹ I have not found Hays to state this, but his work in aligning Paul's πίστις phrases shows he clearly understands the connections.

² Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11* (2nd edn; Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2002): 173, 166, 132, respectively. Hays acknowledges, however, that Paul's concise language does not decisively rule out the possibility that ἀκοή πίστεως includes the exercise of human faith (pp. 131-32).

³ James D. G. Dunn, 'Once More, ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ' in *1991 Seminar Papers: One Hundred Twenty-Seventh Annual Meeting, November 23-26, 1991* (SBLSP 30; Atlanta: Scholars, 1991): 736.

⁴ Scholars in this camp include Sam Williams, Richard Longenecker, Ben Witherington, Louis Martyn, and Ann Jervis (Sam K. Williams, 'The Hearing of Faith: Ἀκοή Πίστεως in Galatians 3', *NTS* 35 [1989]: 82-93; Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians* [WBC 41; Dallas: Word Books, 1990]: 114; Ben Witherington, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians* [Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1998]: 182, 212-13, 218; J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 33A; New York: Doubleday,

extreme and has issued a partial retraction. He now says that to deny Abraham ‘as an exemplary paradigm for faith’ in Galatians 3:6-9 is overly precise and that those who are Abraham’s children ‘stand in this relationship to him precisely insofar as they share his orientation toward God in faith (3:6-7)’.⁵ While Hays has come to see Abraham representing believers in chapter 3, he continues to hold that Abraham corresponds to Christ.⁶ Can Abraham, however, at the same time and in the same argument represent both Christ and Christians? In softening the dichotomy between Abraham as a model for believers and Abraham as a paradigm for Christ, Hays loses the distinctive roles of justifier and justified that Paul emphasises in chapters 2–3. Instead, both Christ and his people would be counted righteous through πίστις (3:6) and would respond in πίστις to the good news preached to them (3:8). Are the Galatians to follow 3:6-9 reading one type of justification for Christ and another for Christians?⁷ Hays introduces an untenable position.

Some scholars on both sides of the *pistis Christou* debate are coming to recognise that defending πίστις Χριστοῦ as a subjective genitive requires hoovering up every relevant reference to ‘faith’ in Galatians—and that it is just as necessary in defending the objective genitive view. Douglas Campbell forwards the debate at this point by observing that Paul’s quotation of Habakkuk 2:4 in Romans 1:17b strongly suggests that Paul cites Habakkuk in order to define his use of ἐκ πίστεως in 1:17a.⁸ Campbell proposes, furthermore, that Habakkuk 2:4 not only underlies Paul’s use of ἐκ πίστεως in 1:17a but that because he uses ἐκ πίστεως only in Galatians and Romans, the two

1997]: 251, 298; L. Ann Jervis, *Galatians* [NIBCNT 9; Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1999]: 69, 72, 79, 83). But Frank Matera sides with Hays on both issues (Frank J. Matera, *Galatians* [SP 9; Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical, 2007]: 112-13, 118).

⁵ Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 290.

⁶ Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 290.

⁷ A. T. Hanson, for example, reads Gal. 3:11 to mean that Jesus was justified by faith, which he explains as Jesus’ vindication by God at his resurrection. The law had unjustly condemned Christ because he lived by faith and not by the law, but the resurrection proves that God found him innocent. (A. T. Hanson, *Studies in Paul’s Technique and Theology* [Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1974]: 41-51.) Such a justification as Hanson attributes to Christ does not apply to the ones who become the righteousness of God only because the one who knew no sin became sin for them (cf. 2 Cor. 5:21).

⁸ Douglas A. Campbell, *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul* (Cambridge, UK/Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2009): 377.

epistles in which he quotes Habakkuk 2:4, the Habakkuk citation fixes the meaning of each use of the phrase in Paul.⁹

The connection between the ἐκ πίστεως phrases and Habakkuk 2:4 that Campbell observes, Francis Watson argues for at more length. Watson notes that because ἐκ and διὰ are used interchangeably when governing πίστις in Galatians 2:16, the ἐκ and διὰ phrases do not differ in meaning in the context.¹⁰ He asks whether the long versions of the law and faith phrases sprinkled throughout Galatians 2–3 are patterned after the short phrases in 3:6-29 or vice versa.¹¹ If ἐκ πίστεως, the short phrase, can account for all the longer formulations, then he posits that Paul's terminology originated in Habakkuk 2:4. To confirm the genesis of the phrase, Watson relies on Campbell's argument that the Habakkuk 2:4 quote in Romans 1:17b defines ἐκ πίστεως in Romans 1:17a, its first appearance in Romans.¹² He adds that the scriptural derivation of Paul's phrases confirms their basic similarity, although each usage will be nuanced according to its immediate context. Therefore, 'by faith of Christ' will mean something similar to 'by hearing of faith' or simply 'by faith', and if one occurrence designates the faith/fulness of Christ, then all will.¹³ Like Campbell, Watson concludes that all of Paul's πίστις Χριστοῦ formulations depend upon his use of Habakkuk 2:4.¹⁴

Dunn has also come to recognise that if πίστις means Christ's faithfulness in one instance and believers' faith in another in the same context without a clear signal of the change, Paul's argument loses its coherence.¹⁵ Now both Campbell and Watson believe that Paul's use of

⁹ Campbell, *Deliverance of God*, 377.

¹⁰ Francis Watson, 'By Faith (of Christ): An Exegetical Dilemma and Its Scriptural Solution' in *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical, and Theological Studies*, ed. Michael F. Bird and Preston M. Sprinkle (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster/Colorado Springs: Hendrickson, 2009): 147-63, esp. 152. Campbell makes the same point (*Deliverance of God*, 378). Other scholars assume without argument that Paul varies the prepositions without changing the meaning of the phrases, e.g. Dieter Kremendahl, *Die Botschaft der Form: Zum Verhältnis von Antiker Epistolographie und Rhetorik im Galaterbrief* (NTOA 46; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag/Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000): 190.

¹¹ Watson, 'Exegetical Dilemma', 151.

¹² Watson, 'Exegetical Dilemma', 153.

¹³ Watson, 'Exegetical Dilemma', 153-54.

¹⁴ Watson, 'Exegetical Dilemma', 154.

¹⁵ James D. G. Dunn, 'ΕΚ ΠΙΣΤΕΩΣ: A Key to the Meaning of ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ' in *The Word Leaps the Gap: Essays on Scripture and Theology in Honor of Richard B. Hays*, ed. J. Ross Wagner, Christopher Kavin Rowe, and A. Katherine Grieb (Cambridge, UK/Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2008): 351-66, esp. 357-

Habakkuk 2:4 provides a clear example of his use of πίστις, but there are key questions as yet unanswered in their argument that this example decides the meaning of other uses of πίστις in the context. Watson, for example, simply assumes that the long and short πίστις phrases in Galatians 2–3 are related: he does not argue for this position.¹⁶ If the phrases are as closely related as Watson and Campbell believe, then showing who exercises the faith in any one of them will show it for all. The interconnectedness of the phrases is, therefore, critical if Habakkuk 2:4 is to resolve the *pistis Christou* debate. But the connections must be verified rather than assumed, as many scholars hold the opposite view.¹⁷ Campbell argues convincingly that the ἐκ πίστεως phrases in Romans 1:17 are related, but does this apply to Galatians? In Galatians, Paul first uses ἐκ πίστεως in 2:16, but he does not cite Habakkuk 2:4 until Galatians 3:11. Paul was deep into his argument before he cited the verse that spawned his central phrase if Habakkuk 2:4 is its source. Furthermore, he begins his argument with a πίστις phrase governed by διὰ in Galatians 2:16. Stylistic variation may explain why Paul uses ἐκ and διὰ interchangeably in the verse, but would he use stylistic variation before setting out the phrase he varies from if he wishes to make a connection to Habakkuk 2:4 obvious?

There are reasons to believe, however, that the πίστις phrases are related in Galatians, namely, the antithesis between πίστις and νόμος ('law') and the continuity of Paul's argument.¹⁸ An examination of the πίστις phrases will support the contention that they are similar in meaning, at least in the basic sense that the faith is exercised by the same group or person. It will follow from this that to discern who exercises the faith in one instance is to understand it for all, and Paul's use of Habakkuk 2:4 will then prove to be decisive.

58. Dunn did not, however, make a sustained argument for his position. He also assumed that Abraham was a parallel to Christians, not to Christ (p. 361). That idea is not assumed in this article, but it is a consequence of it.

¹⁶ Watson, 'Exegetical Dilemma', 151.

¹⁷ See n. 4.

¹⁸ Dunn recognises the similarity in meaning among the πίστις phrases in Romans and Galatians but does not offer verification for it ('ΕΚ ΠΙΣΤΕΩΣ', 358-59).

3. Connection of the Πίστις Phrases in Galatians 2:15–3:14

Destá Heliso is among the scholars who reject a common basic meaning among the ἐκ πίστεως phrases in Galatians 3. He says that ‘some uses of ἐκ πίστεως, which most probably are informed by the same phrase in Hab 2:4, have an anthropological meaning’ but also that ‘in the context of Gal 3, ἐκ πίστεως should not always be understood as a human action’.¹⁹ Furthermore, he denies that the antithesis between Paul’s πίστις phrases and νόμος phrases relates to justification on the grounds that Paul’s critics do not relate ἔργα νόμου (‘works of law’) to justification.²⁰ For this he cites Deuteronomy 9:6; 10:12-15; and Isaiah 63:8-10 to verify that Israelites performed good works out of gratitude to the Lord because of his ‘love and their legitimacy as the covenant people’, but he offers no evidence that his conclusion from these verses was theirs, and he omits citing verses such as Leviticus 18:5 (quoted in Gal. 3:12 on justification) or its allusions in Ezekiel 18:9, 21; 20:11, 13 on the law giving life to people who obey it.²¹ Dealing further with Jewish views of justification is beyond the scope of this essay. The goal of this section is to establish justification as Paul’s topic at least from 2:16–3:14 in order to show that the context for the contrast between the πίστις phrases and νόμος phrases is unchanged within those verses. This will support the idea that the πίστις phrases retain their basic meaning throughout the section.

The context provides the initial tie among the πίστις phrases. Paul establishes the theme of justification in Galatians 2:15-21 by using δικαίω (‘justify’) three times in verse 16, once in verse 17, and then the related noun δικαιοσύνη (‘righteousness’) in verse 21. And he does not drop the topic there, but carries it well into chapter 3. In 3:6 he quotes Genesis 15:6 on Abraham’s justification, in 3:8 Genesis

¹⁹ Destá Heliso, *Pistis and the Righteous One: A Study of Romans 1:17 against the Background of Scripture and Second Temple Jewish Literature*, ed. Jörg Frey (WUNT 235; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007): 252 and 250, respectively. Heliso offers Gal. 3:7 as an example of the anthropological meaning of the phrase (p. 241). See n. 4 for other scholars with similar views.

²⁰ Heliso, *Pistis and the Righteous One*, 208-209, 220, 222, 239. Heliso says Paul contrasted πίστις Χριστοῦ with ἔργα νόμου ‘probably’ because the Jewish Christians saw works of the law as a way to establish Gentile Christians as God’s people (p. 209), but he does not verify that people thought this way.

²¹ Heliso, *Pistis and the Righteous One*, 208.

12:3/18:18 for Gentile justification, and in 3:11 the statement on justification from Habakkuk 2:4.

As Paul moves through Galatians 2:15–3:14 he sets πίστις against νόμος according to the following table, Law and Faith Phrases. All occurrences of the two words are included, and uses not governed by a preposition are given in brackets. Πίστις only occurs in prepositional phrases.

Verse	Law phrase	Faith phrase
2:16	ἐξ ἔργων νόμου (3 times)	διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ
2:19-21	διὰ νόμου (2 times) [νόμῳ]	ἐν πίστει τῇ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ
3:2, 5	ἐξ ἔργων νόμου (1 time per verse)	ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως (1 time per verse)
3:7-10	ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τοῦ νόμου	ἐκ πίστεως (3 times)
3:11-14	ἐν νόμῳ [ὁ νόμος] ἐκ τῆς κατάρας τοῦ νόμου	ἐκ πίστεως (2 times) διὰ τῆς πίστεως

Law and Faith Phrases

The three sections: 2:15-21; 3:1-5; and 3:6-14 are subdivided in the table according to the contrast Paul makes between πίστις and νόμος. The table highlights the fact, argued here, that νόμος replaces ἔργα νόμου ('works of law') in two of the sections, namely, 2:15-21 and 3:6-14. In the first section, Paul sets up the principle in 2:16 that people are not justified by ἔργα νόμου. He continues his argument on justification in 2:17-21 by asking in verse 17 whether Christ is a minister of sin if 'we Jews' who seek justification in Christ are also found sinners. He then states in verse 18 that he makes himself a transgressor if he rebuilds what he once destroyed, which he explains (γάρ) in verse 19 by noting that through law (νόμος) he died to law (νόμος) in order to live to God. To follow the line of reasoning in 2:15-21 would require another study. For this discussion it is important simply to note that if Paul wished to distinguish between ἔργα νόμου and νόμος, he would need to make it evident since dying to the law in verse 19 would at least include exemption from its works in verse 16. The natural conclusion is that Paul continues with one term what he

began with the other, and νόμος and ἔργα νόμου are interchangeable in this passage.

Similarly, Galatians 3:6-14 begins in verses 7-10 by contrasting people from πίστις with people from ἔργα νόμου but finishes by setting πίστις against νόμος in verses 11-14.²² Because verse 11 explains that the people from ‘works of law’ in verse 10 are those who look to the ‘law’ for justification, it follows that people from works of the law attempt to perform the works of the law since any law, by the nature of being ‘law’, justifies those who perform it and condemns those who do not. Clearly, then, performing the ‘works of the law’ in verse 10 for justification corresponds to doing the ‘law’ in verse 12 for (eternal) life, and again ἔργα νόμου and νόμος are necessarily equivalent.

Does the same conclusion apply to Paul’s πίστις phrases? In other words, because νόμος is shorthand for ἔργα νόμου in 2:15-21 and in 3:6-14 and because both terms are contrasted with πίστις Χριστοῦ in 2:15-21 and with πίστις in 3:6-14 in Paul’s discourse on justification, does it follow that πίστις is an abbreviation for πίστις Χριστοῦ in this context? To decide this issue, we determine first whether the πίστις phrases share a basic meaning within each section and second whether the three sections relate to each other in a way that preserves that meaning across the sections.

The πίστις phrases within 2:15-21 are all variations of πίστις Χριστοῦ, and the two πίστις phrases within 3:1-5 are identical. Therefore within each of the first two sections, the πίστις phrases share a common meaning. In verses 6-14, πίστις is unrelated to any noun. The phrase διὰ τῆς πίστεως occurs once and ἐκ πίστεως five times, including two instances in which it is articular. The meaning of οἱ ἐκ πίστεως, the articular phrase, in Galatians 3:7, 9 is tied to its context. In 2:16 Paul spoke of justification ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ. Then in 3:8, between the two phrases of interest in verses 7 and 9, he describes God’s justifying the Gentiles ἐκ πίστεως. The phrase οἱ ἐκ πίστεως, then, would most naturally point to the people seeking justification ἐκ πίστεως. Since verse 8 lies between verses 7 and 9, and explains οἱ ἐκ πίστεως by means of ἐκ πίστεως, the faith in each

²² Although the argument of the text has a natural break between 3:9 and 3:10, v. 10 specifically speaks of the *people* from works of law, just as vv. 7, 9 speak of the *people* from faith. Since the contrast is clearly intentional, v. 10 is included with vv. 7-9 in the table of terms.

instance is exercised by the same person(s). Scholars do not generally debate the tie to justification although they vary in their wording when translating the phrase, and they differ in their opinions of whose faith is in question.²³ Now because eschatological life and justification walk hand in hand, one who seeks justification ἐκ πίστεως in verses 7 and 9 is one who has life by faith in verse 11;²⁴ and thus the one expressing the faith is the same for all occurrences of πίστις in 3:7-11. Verse 12 continues the argument from verse 11 by adding that the law is not ἐκ πίστεως. Verses 13-14 focus again on the curse of verse 10 to say Christ redeemed ‘us’ from the curse of the law in order that ‘we’ might receive the Spirit διὰ τῆς πίστεως. This links verses 13-14, and with it the last πίστις phrase in this section, to the earlier part of the argument and therefore to the one expressing the faith in verses 7-12.

The next point to establish is that Paul carries his argument from one section to another in a way that maintains the fundamental sense of the πίστις phrases. Galatians 3:1-5 differs from the sections before and after it in that it falls in the middle of Paul’s argument on justification, but focuses on the Spirit and omits any mention of δικαιοῶ or its cognates. However, the topic of the Spirit is no mere excursus. Rather, Paul links the justification of Gentiles to the blessing of Abraham in 3:8, and the blessing of Abraham to the sending of the Spirit in 3:14. Therefore 3:1-5 is directly in the context of, and indirectly on the topic of, justification.

Galatians 3:1-5 also shares with its context a contrast between ἔργα νόμου and a πίστις phrase. Because πίστις is related to ἀκοή (‘hearing’) rather than to Χριστός, however, it must be shown that this

²³ Matera defines the phrase as ‘those who have been saved from and through the faith of Jesus Christ’ and Longenecker as ‘those who rely on faith’ (Matera, *Galatians*, 118; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 114). Hays interprets οἱ ἐκ πίστεως to mean ‘those [who live] ἐκ πίστεως’ where ‘live’ refers to having eschatological life and πίστις to Christ’s faith (*Faith of Jesus Christ*, 171 [brackets in original]). Martyn goes against the pack somewhat with the definition ‘those whose identity is derived from faith’ where the faith is that of both the Christian and Christ (Martyn, *Galatians*, 299).

²⁴ Some scholars understand Gal. 3:11 to say that people who are righteous by faith live, e.g. Watson, ‘Exegetical Dilemma’, 159-62; F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1982): 161; and M.-J. Lagrange, *Saint Paul: Épître Aux Galates* (2nd edn; Etudes Bibliques; Paris: J. Gabalda, 1950): 71. Albrecht Oepke finds the linguistic arguments to be stronger for combining ἐκ πίστεως with ζήσεται (‘will live’) than with δικαιοῶ, but he acknowledges both possibilities (*Der Brief des Paulus an die Galater* [5th edn; THKNT 9; Berlin: Evangelische, 1984]: 106). Watson’s position will be considered in the next section.

section is connected closely enough both to 2:15-21 and to 3:6-14 that the one exercising the faith is the same in each case. 3:1 ties 3:1-5 to chapter 2 when it expresses Paul's frustration with the Galatians for failing to deduce earlier what he concludes now from his argument in 2:15-21. In chapter 2 Paul contrasted ἔργα νόμου with πίστις Χριστοῦ and concluded that the latter justifies and the former does not. In 3:1-5 he asks the Galatians how they received the Spirit and suggests two possibilities: ἔργα νόμου and ἀκοή πίστεως. Paul's rebuke in 3:1 together with his continued contrast of νόμος and πίστις make it clear that he is relying upon the argument he began in chapter 2. Although the phrase ἀκοή πίστεως itself does not include an explicit reference to Christ as subject or object of the faith, as πίστις Χριστοῦ does in 2:16, 20, Paul's readers could hardly have missed the connection to Christ since 3:1-5 relates their own beginning in him. Therefore, ἀκοή πίστεως in 3:2, 5, whatever its precise meaning, serves a function similar to that of πίστις Χριστοῦ in chapter 2.²⁵ Now if Paul sets up an association between 'faith' terms and then without warning changes the referent of the one expressing the faith, he destroys his own argument. The πίστις phrases in 2:15-3:5 will at least share that referent in common.

It remains to consider the relationship between 3:1-5 and 3:6-14. Καθώς ('just as') in 3:6 makes the connection between 3:1-5 and 3:6-14 explicit. Clearly πιστεύω provides the specific link because it is the only non-trivial word in 3:6 that shares a root in common with a word in 3:1-5.²⁶ Verse 14 ends the section with another distinct connection to 3:1-5, that of receiving the Spirit. In 3:2, 5 one received the Spirit ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως and in 3:14 διὰ τῆς πίστεως. It is highly unlikely that Paul would speak of receiving the Spirit through the faith/fulness of Christ in one expression and through a person's own faith in the other in two adjacent sections of text (i.e. 3:1-5 and 3:6-14) which he plainly connects. It appears instead that he explains in verse 14 what it meant

²⁵ See Williams, 'Hearing of Faith', 82-93; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 102-103; Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 124-32; and François Vouga, *An die Galater* (HNT 10; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998): 67, for possible meanings of the phrase. See Franz Mußner, *Der Galaterbrief: Auslegung* (5th edn; HKNT 9; Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1988): 216-17, for one possible connection between the faith of Abraham and of believers in Christ. But solving that problem is beyond the scope of this essay.

²⁶ That Abraham's faith was specifically in God in v. 6 and that Paul compares the content of Abraham's faith to the gospel in v. 8 are not germane to the argument here. The issue under consideration is who exercises the faith in the πίστις phrases.

in verses 2 and 5 that the Galatians had received the Spirit: the blessing of Abraham had arrived.

This section has demonstrated that the three major subdivisions within 2:15–3:14 share the topic of justification, that Paul contrasts a πίστις phrase with νόμος or ἔργα νόμου within each subdivision, that νόμος and ἔργα νόμου are interchangeable in this context, that 3:1-5 builds upon the argument from 2:15-21, and 3:6-14 upon that from 3:1-5. From the correlation that Paul constructs among terms, it follows that his uses of πίστις—πίστις Χριστοῦ in 2:15-21, ἀκοή πίστεως in 3:1-5, and πίστις in 3:6-14—are equivalent at least to the extent that they speak of a faith exercised by the same subject. Therefore, Paul's use of πίστις at any point in 2:15–3:14 will determine whether πίστις Χριστοῦ is subjective or objective, and this introduces Habakkuk into the debate.²⁷ If it can be determined that Paul uses Habakkuk 2:4 in Galatians 3:11 messianically, then πίστις Χριστοῦ is a subjective genitive; but if he cites it to refer to human faith, the genitive is objective.²⁸

4. Whose Faith?

The Righteous One in Habakkuk 2:4 as a Deciding Issue

Hays offers the most detailed argument I have found in recent literature that Habakkuk 2:4 speaks of Messiah's faith.²⁹ To identify the righteous in Habakkuk 2:4 with Christ, Hays notes that the LXX

²⁷ Dietrich-Alex Koch also recognised that Paul set up a contrast between νόμος and πίστις in 3:1-5 which he carries into subsequent verses. Koch does not use Hab. 2:4b in Gal. 3:11 to solve the πίστις Χριστοῦ problem, however, but finds Paul to quote Hab. 2:4b without the μου of the LXX so that πίστις in the quote corresponds to the other uses of πίστις in Galatians 3, a faith sourced in humans (Dietrich-Alex Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums: Untersuchungen zur Verwendung und zum Verständnis der Schrift bei Paulus* [BHT 69; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1986]: 127).

²⁸ The question about whether ἐκ πίστεως is an abbreviated form of ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ is answerable now but almost irrelevant to the argument in this essay. Since the one exercising the faith is the same in the πίστις phrases in 2:15–3:14 and since each subsection relates conversion to Christ to the πίστις phrases—2:16 makes the relationship explicit in 2:15-21; 3:1-2 in 3:1-5; and 3:13-14 in 3:6-14—it follows that the faith at issue is faith related to Christ. Therefore, either all the πίστις phrases throughout 2:15–3:14 speak of faith in Christ or all speak of Christ's faith/fulness.

²⁹ Others who understand Paul's use of Hab. 2:4 christologically include Ian Wallis and A. T. Hanson (Ian G. Wallis, *The Faith of Jesus Christ in Early Christian Traditions* [SNTSMS 84; Cambridge, UK/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995]: 111; and Hanson, *Paul's Technique and Theology*, 42).

translates the masculine Hebrew word רִאָּיָה ('vision') in Habakkuk 2:2, 3 with the feminine Greek word ὄρασις ('vision') but retains the masculine pronouns referring to it in verse 3. In the LXX, therefore, a person ('he') comes rather than a vision ('it'). Hays then, with Hebrews 10:37, adds the article to ἐρχόμενος ('coming') in Habakkuk 2:3 (LXX) so that it reads 'the Coming One'. Adding the article does not change the message of Habakkuk 2 but simply recognises the Lord's appearance in chapter 3 as part of the vision of chapter 2. Hays then equates the Coming One of 2:3, that is, the Messiah, with the Righteous One in 2:4.³⁰

While Hays turns to Habakkuk, Campbell argues for a christological interpretation of Romans 1:17. Because of difficulties he sees in taking πίστις in verse 17a as human faith, Campbell finds it sufficient to prove the suitability, rather than the necessity, of Habakkuk 2:4 as a messianic witness in Romans 1:17b.³¹ He proceeds to summarise evidence scholars have made for this reading. A reference to a man or woman as ὁ δίκαιος ('the righteous one'), for example, would ill fit Paul's argument in the first few chapters of Romans where he repeatedly paints humanity as ἄδικος ('unrighteous') and ἀδικία ('unrighteous').³² Furthermore, the New Testament uses ὁ δίκαιος as a christological title outside Paul, and it is characteristic for Paul to use articular substantives as titles for Christ and texts to support christological points.³³ Campbell finds Hebrews 10:37-38 to suggest a messianic form of Habakkuk 2:4 used by the early church and adds that if Paul shared such a reading with the church, then it is likely he would have used it in his epistles.³⁴ In the end, Campbell concludes that it seems credible, and is at least possible, to read Habakkuk 2:4 in Romans 1:17b in terms of the faithfulness of Christ; and he correctly reasons that it is unlikely that Paul would shift his position between Galatians and Romans.³⁵

³⁰ Richard B. Hays, 'Apocalyptic Hermeneutics: Habakkuk Proclaims "The Righteous One"' in *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel's Scripture* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2005): 119-42, esp. 132.

³¹ Douglas A. Campbell, 'Romans 1:17: A Crux Interpretum for the πίστις Χριστοῦ Debate', *JBL* 113 (1994): 265-85, esp. 282.

³² Campbell, 'Romans 1:17', 282.

³³ Campbell, 'Romans 1:17', 282-83.

³⁴ Campbell, 'Romans 1:17', 283-84.

³⁵ Campbell, 'Romans 1:17', 279, 284.

Watson is one of the few scholars to attempt to refute the christological position on Habakkuk 2:4. He sees two options for the meaning of Paul's citation: 'the one who is righteous by faith will live' and 'the Righteous One [i.e. the Messiah] will live by faith', with the choice between them depending upon whether πίστις modifies the subject or verb.³⁶ Since he acknowledges only these two possibilities, the problems he proposes to solve are: (1) whether Habakkuk 2:4 is the source of ὁ δίκαιος as a christological title and (2) whether ἐκ πίστεως connects to the subject or the verb.³⁷ Watson cogently argues that 'the Righteous One' derives from Isaiah 53:10-11 rather than from Habakkuk 2:4 on the grounds that several of the main passages that use the title christologically also allude to Isaiah 52:13-53:12.³⁸ He turns next to the question of whether ἐκ πίστεως points backward to δίκαιος or forward to ζήσεται ('will live'). Because Paul associates ἐκ πίστεως a number of times with δίκαιος or a cognate, but never with life, Watson concludes that Paul makes the same association in Habakkuk 2:4.³⁹ Thus 'the-one-who-is-righteous-by-faith will live'. He confirms his interpretation by means of the correspondence he finds in Galatians 3:11 between ὁ δίκαιος and οὐδείς δικαιοῦται ('no one is justified') and between ἐκ πίστεως and ἐν νόμῳ. The verse reads, ὅτι ἐν νόμῳ οὐδείς δικαιοῦται παρὰ τῷ θεῷ δήλον, ὅτι ὁ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται. ('Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law; for "The one who is righteous will live by faith"' [NRSV].) Therefore Watson concludes that to translate 3:11 using 'the Righteous One will live by faith' loses the symmetry of 'justified by Law' and 'righteous by faith'.⁴⁰

Although Paul clearly intends to contrast ἐκ πίστεως and ἐν νόμῳ in Galatians 3:11, οὐδείς δικαιοῦται, a subject and verb, would more readily correspond to ὁ δίκαιος ... ζήσεται, another subject and verb, than to ὁ δίκαιος alone. The association between 'by law' and 'justified' then furnishes better evidence for an association between 'by faith' and 'will live' than for the correspondence Watson proposes since both prepositional phrases in this case would modify the verbs. But Watson's main evidence that ἐκ πίστεως modifies the noun

³⁶ Watson, 'Exegetical Dilemma', 148, 159.

³⁷ Watson, 'Exegetical Dilemma', 155.

³⁸ Watson, 'Exegetical Dilemma', 156.

³⁹ Watson, 'Exegetical Dilemma', 159-61.

⁴⁰ Watson, 'Exegetical Dilemma', 161-62.

δίκαιος in Galatians 3:11 is that Paul associates ἐκ πίστεως with δίκαιος or a cognate in his writings and never with ‘life’. However, because Paul’s topic is justification rather than life per se, it is natural that more terms would be associated with cognates of δίκαιος than with ‘life’. And in Galatians 2:20 Paul does associate the phrase ἐν πίστει (‘by faith’) with the verb ζάω (‘live’) when he says ἐν πίστει ζῶ τῆ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ (‘I live by faith in/of the Son of God’). These observations do not disprove that ἐκ πίστεως modifies δίκαιος, but simply indicate that it has not been proven. If Galatians says that the one justified by faith lives, then Watson correctly concludes that that one is a generic individual rather than Christ, and the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ is decided.⁴¹

While Watson recognises that the πίστις phrases in the context of Paul’s Habakkuk 2:4 citations are connected, he acknowledges only two options for Paul’s use of πίστις in the quote: either Messiah will live by faith, or one who is justified by faith will live. He does not consider the possibility that a righteous individual will live by faith, the view most commonly held and one that must be evaluated. If ἐκ πίστεως modifies ζήσεται either a righteous person lives by faith (perhaps by Messiah’s faith/fulness?), or Messiah lives by his faith/fulness.

The identity of the righteous, however, may be resolved by a closer look at Habakkuk. Hays argued well for a messianic interpretation of the ‘coming one’ in Habakkuk 2:3 of the LXX. The problem is his identification of the coming one of 2:3 with the righteous one of 2:4. Radu Gheorghita notes that one who could shrink back cannot logically be equated with one who will surely come.⁴² The argument below that the righteous in Habakkuk 2:4 are Gentiles and not Messiah is condensed from my previous work. To repeat the entire line of reasoning would be to delve into details of Habakkuk and lose the focus of the present article, but I refer the interested reader to the

⁴¹ Watson, ‘Exegetical Dilemma’, 159. See n. 7 of the present article and the paragraph referencing it for more on the difference between the justification required for Christ and that of the generic individual, both of which would have to be included in the context of Galatians 3 for 3:11 to speak of Christ’s justification by faith and 3:8 to speak of the justification of Gentiles.

⁴² Radu Gheorghita, *The Role of the Septuagint in Hebrews: An Investigation of its Influence with Special Consideration to the Use of Hab 2:3-4 in Heb 10:37-38* (WUNT 160; Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2003): 216. Cited also by Heliso, *Pistis and the Righteous One*, 48.

earlier article. In his prophecy, after an initial reference to the righteous of Israel in 1:4, Habakkuk speaks again of the righteous in 1:13. In this second instance, however, the Lord appeals to the prophet in 1:5 to look among the nations, and Habakkuk responds in 1:12-17 with a complaint about the way the Chaldeans slay people from the nations. The righteous in 1:13, therefore, are Gentiles. The righteous who live by faith in 2:4 are also described in context. Verse 5 speaks of the gathering of all nations and peoples, and verses 6-20 describe their response to the fall of their oppressor. They speak *righteous* words against sin (2:6, 9, 12, 15, 19); they *live* after the overthrow of the Chaldeans (2:5-8); they have *faith* in the Lord (2:14, 16, 20). They are people of the nations conquered by the Chaldeans (2:5-6), and it runs counter to the context of Habakkuk to identify the righteous one in 2:4 as Messiah. The Coming One of 2:3, whether person or vision, is not the righteous one of 2:4.⁴³

Could Paul have reinterpreted ὁ δίκαιος so that it refers to Christ? Heliso answers in the affirmative and argues for just such a reading in Romans 1:17.⁴⁴ Before turning to Paul, however, Heliso looks at Habakkuk 2:4 in citations in Second Temple Judaism and Hebrews 10:37-38 because a messianic use of the verse outside Paul would indicate a precedent he might follow. After discussing *Pesher Habakkuk* and *Nahal Hever Habakkuk*, Heliso concludes that neither can be read so that ὁ δίκαιος is Messiah and that, in fact, ‘no pre-Pauline Jewish writing cites Hab 2:4 in such a way that the citation can be understood messianically’.⁴⁵ He takes heart, however, when he turns to Hebrews because the author reverses the order of Habakkuk 2:4a and 2:4b. Heliso posits that this was probably to create a parallel between the coming one and the righteous one so as to depict the latter as Christ.⁴⁶ He further suggests that ‘[a]s ὁ δίκαιός μου has a similar sense to the messianic υἱός μου (“my son”) in Heb 1:5 (cf. Ps 2:7; 89:3, 20; Isa 53:11), the equivalence (if there is one) between “the coming one” and “my righteous one” cannot be regarded as farfetched’.⁴⁷ Now the messianic son in 1:5 does not determine the

⁴³ Debbie Hunn, ‘Habakkuk 2.4b in Its Context: How Far off Was Paul?’, *JSOT* 34 (2009): 219-39. *Contra* Hays, ‘Apocalyptic Hermeneutics’, 132.

⁴⁴ Heliso, *Pistis and the Righteous One*, 146-63, esp. 152.

⁴⁵ Heliso, *Pistis and the Righteous One*, 54-61, 245; quote on p. 164.

⁴⁶ Heliso, *Pistis and the Righteous One*, 65.

⁴⁷ Heliso, *Pistis and the Righteous One*, 65.

identity of ‘my righteous one’ in 10:38 any more than the non-messianic sons in 12:6. But that a christological take on Hebrews 10:38 is farfetched is evident in the line of thought in Hebrews 10:37-39. The author connects ‘we’, the readers, in verse 39 to the one who shrinks back in verse 38b. And the antecedent of ‘he’ (the one who may shrink back) in verse 38b is clearly ‘my righteous one’ in verse 38a. This breaks any possible parallelism between ‘the [messianic] coming one’ of verse 37 and ‘my righteous one’ in verse 38.⁴⁸

When Heliso considers the question of whether ὁ δίκαιος in Romans 1:17 could be Christ, he acknowledges an absence of immediate contextual signals pointing to him.⁴⁹ But he finds 5:19 to refer to Jesus as the righteous one because ‘the claim that many will be constituted δίκαιοι through the obedience of One Man would be meaningless if that One Man were not by implication [ὁ] δίκαιος *par excellence*’.⁵⁰ That Jesus is righteous, however, is undisputed. The issue is whether ὁ δίκαιος is used as a messianic designation for him in Romans 1:17b. Romans 5:19 does not forward the argument.

Resolving the difficulties Campbell finds in the phrase ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν (‘from faith to faith’) in Romans 1:17a goes beyond the scope of this essay. But it should be noted that the Habakkuk 2:4 quote in Romans 1:17b follows the reference to a salvation for all who believe (παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι), Jew and Greek, in Romans 1:16. Similarly, Galatians 3:11 cites Habakkuk 2:4 on the heels of the reference to Gentile justification ἐκ πίστεως in Galatians 3:8. Therefore the context of Paul’s use of Habakkuk 2:4 in both Romans and Galatians shares Habakkuk’s focus on Gentiles and argues that Paul did not deviate from the original intention of the verse. In other words, Paul quotes Habakkuk 2:4 in the context of Gentile justification in Galatians 3:11 and Romans 1:17 to refer to the faith of the Gentiles.

Campbell points out that if Paul changed his use of Habakkuk 2:4 between Galatians 3:11 and Romans 1:17, it would be ‘something of a bonus for his opponents’.⁵¹ By the same token, however, if Paul gave an Old Testament quotation about righteous Gentiles a messianic spin,

⁴⁸ See also James D. G. Dunn, ‘*Pistis and the Righteous One*’, review of Desta Heliso, *Pistis and the Righteous One: A Study of Romans 1:17 Against the Background of Scripture and Second Temple Jewish Literature* (2007) in *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 40 (2009): 400-402, esp. 400.

⁴⁹ Heliso, *Pistis and the Righteous One*, 146-47.

⁵⁰ Heliso, *Pistis and the Righteous One*, 148.

⁵¹ Campbell, ‘Romans 1:17’, 279.

his opponents would not trouble themselves to look for discrepancies between Romans and Galatians: Paul would have already lost that point. To base an argument on an Old Testament text that does not support it would convince neither the Galatians nor Paul's opponents. Hays rightly chides scholars for simply assuming that Paul, when citing Habakkuk 2:4, disregards its context.⁵² From the close linkage among the πίστις phrases in Galatians 2:15–3:14, then, it follows that the one exercising the faith is the same in each phrase; and from the reference of πίστις in 3:11 to human faith, it follows that πίστις Χριστοῦ refers to human faith as well.⁵³

5. Conclusion

Tracing Paul's πίστις phrases in Galatians 2:15–3:14 verifies the close association Richard Hays saw and others have begun to recognise among Paul's uses of πίστις in Galatians 2–3. Although the phrases are not identical in meaning, to carry Paul's argument they must share in common at least the identity of the one exercising the faith. Thus, to determine the use of a single occurrence of πίστις in the passage determines who expresses the faith in all occurrences, and this allows Habakkuk 2:4 a role in the *pistis Christou* debate. Because Paul cites Habakkuk 2:4 in Galatians 3:11, the context of Habakkuk impacts Paul's use of πίστις in Galatians; and because Habakkuk 2:4 speaks of the faith of the people of the nations, πίστις Χριστοῦ in Galatians 2:16, 20 speaks of the faith believers have in Christ.

⁵² Hays, 'Apocalyptic Hermeneutics', 137-38.

⁵³ R. Barry Matlock has shown from the structure of Gal. 2:16 that πίστις refers to the faith of believers in Christ ('Saving Faith: The Rhetoric and Semantics of πίστις in Paul' in *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical, and Theological Studies*, ed. Michael F. Bird and Preston M. Sprinkle [Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster/Colorado Springs: Hendrickson, 2009]: 73-89, esp. 83-89; repr. from *JSNT* 30 [2007]). Thus the chain of πίστις phrases in Galatians begins with πίστις as a clear reference to human faith.